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ABSTRACT

Just as medical practitioners have professional associations to safeguard the public from poor doctoring, so too should the community college teaching profession be guided by a national association to oversee teachers' performance, especially given the tremendous role teachers play in an individual's development. Achieving the degree of professionalism reflected by the presence of such national associations would require the ascension of several levels of occupational professionalism. From the most simple to the most complex, these levels are: (1) occupation, where employment results in one's primary source of income; (2) commitment to calling, acceptance of the profession's standards, and identification with one's peers and the profession; (3) the identification of distinctly occupational interests; (4) a readily apparent body of knowledge; (5) service orientation that transcends personal concerns in the interest of the community; and (6) professional autonomy restrained only by responsibility. The community college teaching profession has not progressed beyond the first step. For teachers to obtain higher levels of professionalism would create more respect between faculty and administration; greater recognition in society; and clearer performance standards to which they could strive. A lack of professional identity and lack of a defined body of knowledge have most hindered this professional attainment. A three-stage model for planned change that could be applied to the professionalization of community college teaching involves creating the motivation for change, actually changing, and firmly maintaining the resulting attitudinal improvements. (GFW)

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THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS

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Presented at the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island - May 26-30, 1990

by Mary Preece

THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS

[OVERHEAD 1]

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon.... It is my pleasure to be able to have this opportunity to attempt to provoke some discussion regarding the professional status of community college teachers. My plan is to address these issues [OVERHEAD 2]. Copies of the overheads are available at the conclusion of this session should you wish to consider the issues further.

First, I would like to invite you to share a flight into fancy with me. [OVERHEAD 3]

Imagine that we have taken a leap ahead into an era when the professional organization of community college faculty is comparable to that of medical practitioners. [OVERHEAD 4]

Similar to their medical colleagues, college faculty in this new era are organized into two functional levels: provincial associations at one level and a national College of Canadian Community College and Institute Faculty - for simplicity's sake, the Triple CIF.

The provincial associations are the bargaining units whose mandate it is to negotiate salaries and working conditions in the best interests of the provincial membership within their jurisdiction.

Triple CIF, the College, on the other hand, is set up to safeguard the public interest.

In the medical scenario, if "doctoring" is not done well, it is potentially harmful to the public. Death may be the result. It is assumed that consumers of medical care are not in a position to judge the quality of physicians' work, and, therefore, the College of Physicians and Surgeons has been annointed the guardian of the public interest. Should poor teaching occur, however, there is no death threat in the medical sense. There is dearth [OVERHEAD 5] - dearth of motivation, dearth of learning, dearth of opportunities - in short dearth of quality education.

As educators, we have sometimes expressed our suspicions that some students have not enjoyed quality education and we may even have suggested that our students may have been victims of the system. Is it not possible that the consumers of education are not in an appropriate position to judge the quality of teaching and learning transpiring in our classrooms? Can we believe that a poor educational system won't inflict serious damage on Canada's future in the world arena? May it not, then, be our responsibility as teachers to protect the public's best interest by regulating ourselves, by assuring that the quality of education delivered and received in our community college system is the best that it can be?

It is in the interest of these concerns affecting public welfare that the Triple CIF, like the College of Physicians and Surgeons, assumed the responsibility of regulating access to the college teaching profession, of judging competence, of determining appropriate professional development activities, and of

disciplining members who have not met acceptable standards of performance. The Triple CIF's chief concern is with the issues pertaining to the quality of education.

To summarize, if we as college faculty were to enjoy full professional status, we might find ourselves working in the above environment. Our rights as employees would be represented by the provincial associations, and our responsibility to contribute toward the optimization of the quality of teaching and learning activities in our unique postsecondary sector would be the concern of the national association.

[OVERHEAD 6] What is this state called professional status that holds the power to drastically change our working environment and to compel us to undertake this flight into fancy?

[OVERHEAD 7] The professionalization of an occupational role may be analogous to the ascending of rungs of a ladder. This ladder has six steps.

[OVERHEAD 8] The first of the ladder's steps, equivalent to the most simplistic definition of a profession, is that of occupation. Professional practice implies participation in a full-time occupation which serves as the principle source of earned income. Earning power distinguishes the professional from the amateur.

Those of us who enjoy full-time status as employees of the college system reap financial benefits for what we do. As such, we can consider ourselves to be professionals.

[OVERHEAD 9] At the next step, a profession implies a commitment to a calling. Accceptance of norms and standards, and identification with professional peers and the profession as a collectivity are equated with commitment.

In our college environment, neither the local campus nor the profession as a whole has provided sufficient standards by which faculty may assess what we do and be recognized for our achievements, indeed, to become renowned teachers and educators in our own right.

[OVERHEAD 10] The organization of a profession constitutes the next step. Organization involves the mutual identification of distinctly occupational interests. These interests may include terms and conditions of employment, criteria of access to the occupation, and the maintenance of performance standards among accepted practitioners.

As college teachers, I think we can probably identify common interests. Terms and conditions of employment are within the purview of our existing provincial faculty organizations or unions, and so may not be issues that can be addressed by us as a collectivity. However, we, as an occupational group, can address the issue of performance standards. What is good teaching? How do we define excellence? How do we assure that our students enjoy the very best that the system has to offer? How do we identify performance strengths and weaknesses in the classroom? Who is responsible for the resultant professional development? As a collectivity, I think that we have abdicated from the establishment

and maintenance of performance standards because of the difficulty incurred when trying to define the art or science of teaching. This difficulty is directly related to the fourth step - the existence of a distinct body of knowledge.

[OVERHEAD 11] The possession of esoteric but useful knowledge and skills based on specialized training or education of exceptional duration, and perhaps of exceptional difficulty, constitutes the fourth step in the process of professionalization.

To the extent that as community college faculty we adhere to our academic disciplines, a body of knowledge is displayed...but a body of knowledge is not readily apparent in the discipline of instruction. Teaching still lacks theoretical justification.

Continued development through scientific investigation must proceed at the community college level in order to describe precisely what it is that we do that cannot effectively be done by anyone else. We can't lay claim to exceptional competence until we can define what constitutes effective college teaching.

Specialized training or education in our respective disciplines is assumed. However, pedagogical preparation to support learning by our frequently adult, nonacademic, nontraditional students is rare.

[OVERHEAD 12] At the next level, a professional must exhibit a service orientation. This implies a level of competence, conscientious performance, and a service mandate that transcends personal concerns in the interests of the community. The

professional is required to serve the interests of clients and the community, and not, in the first instance, his own.

I believe that the service mandate of college teachers is a strong one, one to which most of us are committed. However, we haven't progressed far enough. We have not developed Codes of Ethical Behaviour for college teachers. We do not have self-proposed and self-imposed standards of behaviour designed to protect our students and ourselves against "bad teaching". How then can we judge if we do in fact meet our service mandate?

[OVERHEAD 13] Ultimately the professional enjoys autonomy restrained only by responsibility. Autonomy is an ultimate value for self-identified members of a professional group. This autonomy, however, has some strings attached. It is dependent on ultruism, commitment, organization, specialized education, and effective norms to assure competent performance. Members of a profession agree to develop and enforce standards of good practice in exchange for the right to practise free of bureaucratic supervision and external regulation.

To which step have we as community college teachers progressed in our quest for professional status? For most of us teaching is our primary source of income, and so we qualify as professionals at the most elementary occupational level. However, because there is no formal acceptance of appropriate norms and standards of performance, it is difficult to support any claim for professional status at the "Commitment" step. We, as a group, definitely do not exhibit the characteristics of formalized standards and control of

access to the occupation entitling us to progress to Step 3 - that of "Organization."

This analysis suggests that community college teachers are, at best, part of an emerging profession, and that the issue of determining and maintaining standards must be addressed if progress up the ladder to professional status is to be enjoyed. College teachers are a long way from the autonomy which we frequently use as armour against administrative intrusion into our teaching arena.

[OVERHEAD 14] Why might college teachers aspire toward professional status?

[OVERHEAD 15] First, if we were to be recognized by others as professionals, we would earn the right to exercise our authority over what is within our jurisdiction to influence and control within our institutions. We would ask to be trusted, and in return we would serve as judges of our own work. Professionalism implies power.

Second, professional stature could contribute to the erosion of the dual-track promotion system which exists in many colleges. This dual track consists of one track for administration and another for faculty. It results in adversarial relations and a restrained natural and desirable movement between teaching and academic administration. As top administrators don't teach and faculty who go into administration are suspect by their colleagues, it is difficult to foster mutual respect and understanding. A stronger and maturer professional status for faculty could

contribute to making more of our members acceptable, and even desirable, candidates to become administrators and leaders.

Third, to enjoy professional status is to enjoy the respect and recognition of society. It acknowledges the acquisition of specialized skills and knowledge.

Next, the statement of performance standards and the subsequent clarification of what constitutes teaching excellence provides a standard toward which we can strive. Recognizing teaching as more than a mysterious chemistry could encourage us to stretch intellectually to reach our potential as good teachers.

In short, proceeding up the ladder toward more sophisticated levels of professionalism could result in our gaining power over the teaching domain, in the recognition of teachers being worthy of promotion and respect, and in the encouragement of college teachers to strive for teaching excellence.

[OVERHEAD 16] Why haven't we moved higher up the ladder?

There are several reasons why we as a professional group have not progressed further up the professionalism ladder.

[OVERHEAD 17] The primary reason for our lack of progression is our lack of professional identity.

Our focus as community college instructors is teaching - a shared focus with secondary school teachers. There exists for many of us, however, the desire to also be identified with university professors, for whom research, a scholarly activity, is the primary concern.

[OVERHEAD 18] Our recent experience in Ontario is interesting as it pertains to this desire. Recent negotiations between the Council of Regents and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union resulted in the replacement of the allegedly sexist title Teaching Master with the title of "Professor". The outcry from the university community strongly suggests that Ontario's university professors object to college teachers calling ourselves professors. In their opinion, we have not fulfilled the traditional academic requirements entitling us to this professional appellate.

Nomenclature debates aside, the real dilemma in the professionalization of community college faculty rests in the duality of our role identity. We wear two hats: one for the discipline which we represent (such as business, engineering technology, applied arts, etc.) and one for our role as teacher.

For the former we have been trained, and it was our expertise in this area that made us attractive candidates to contribute to the teaching/learning process within the college community.

The latter, the teaching role, is the one for which most of us were not pedagogically prepared. Having been students somewhere at sometime, we transferred what we believed to be "good teaching behaviours" into our own classrooms. Although we may all see ourselves as an inspirational John Keating (Robin Williams' role in Dead Poet's Society), our students have sometimes suggested otherwise. How on earth do we become a John Keating? How are we supposed to discover the secrets of how to inspire, motivate, and

graduate large numbers of students to become contributing, thinking members of society?

We must define our professional identity if we are to progress, if we are to get better at what we do. It is time that we as community college teachers begin to identify with ourselves. We are engaged in a different effort in education than the others.

[OVERHEAD 19] What does it mean, from a professional point of view, to be a faculty member in a community college?

We are a part of higher education, but we have not historically conducted research, the raison d'etre of the university community. Although most community college faculty members are deeply concerned about professionalism, our natural ties are neither with the high school organizations nor with university faculty associations. We have organized on a local level into faculty organizations or unions. And although these organizations/unions have celebrated collective bargaining victories, they have not contributed to our professional identity.

The creation of an identity is dependent on the establishment of standards and the assumption of responsibilities that those of us within the profession must identify and impose upon ourselves. This task is made difficult because of the perceived lack of a defined body of knowledge for college teachers.

The absence of a body of knowledge for teaching has resulted in our failure to define and reward teaching excellence. The norm for advancement in the colleges has generally been based on seniority. Rewards for teaching effectiveness are often suspect

because we do not trust the criteria used to define excellence - criteria which are frequently inconsistent and based on immeasureable factors.

[OVERHEAD 20] How can we climb higher?

In the Dead Poet's Society, Robin Williams' character, John Keating, urged his students to Carpe Diem - to Seize the Day. I believe that it is within our power as college teachers to seize the day, and to begin the process of critical self-examination required to establish professional guidelines regarding teaching behaviours. [OVERHEAD 21]

We have an exciting opportunity to contribute to the elevation of college teaching to a professional status. We have an opportunity to transfer what we have learned from our teaching focus into a stable set of teaching standards. This exercise has not been successfully tackled in the past in either the colleges or the universities. Canada's community college system has the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to our own professional identity and subsequently to the quality of education in the higher education domain.

If community college faculty are to achieve professional status, there must be a nationwide effort on our part not just to disseminate information but to interpret the distinctive features of our work and to establish the standards for these activities.

[OVERHEAD 22] How can we get there from here? Participating in a process of planned change could facilitate our evolution into full professional status.

[OVERHEAD 23] Planned change is the result of learning new concepts and ideas, new attitudes and values, and/or new patterns of behaviour and skills. The learning has to occur in a situation in which, by virtue of membership in the social system, individuals already have ways of thinking, feeling, and acting to which they are committed and which make sense to them.

A change agent must assume that members of the social system are committed to the present way of operating, and will, therefore, resist learning something new. Therefore, the essence of the planned change process is the unlearning of present ways of doing things. This unlearning phase is the most difficult component of change.

Many innovative ideas in education are never attended to because there is no motivation to change in the first place, and many that are attempted fail to survive because the change is not integrated into the total system of the school or the personality of the teacher trying out the innovation.

What follows is a three-stage model which is cyclical and dynamic in nature and which describes the process of planned change or innovation.

[OVERHEAD 24] Stage 1 is Unfreezing - the creation of the motivation to change. The mechanisms identified in unfreezing are the lack of confirmation or disconfirmation of present beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviour patterns. This results in the induction of guilt-anxiety, and subsequent motivation, by comparing the actual world with ideal states.

Motivation alone will not result in unfreezing. It must be accompanied by a sense of safety. Individuals or systems will not change if any psychological threat exists.

[OVERHEAD 25] Step 2 is the Changing phase. A change of cognitions, attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns is fundamental to this phase, and ultimately results from the acquisition of new information. The new information helps to redefine the situation and enables new kinds of responses.

[OVERHEAD 26] Change involves a process of searching out a model with which to identify, or scanning the information environment, and selecting ideas that best fit. The innovation may be adopted or may be adapted from a range of sources. Adaptation rather than adoption takes longer, but is more likely to produce a solution that will be readily refrozen and integrated into the present system.

[OVERHEAD 27] The identification of a desireable change leads to Stage 3 -the Refreezing of the changed behaviours. Refreezing involves the stabilizing and integrating of new beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns into the rest of the system. It is essential for the long-term survival and integration of the innovation. It is very difficult for an individual to sustain a change which does not fit other parts of his or her personality or is incongruent with what others in a reference group expect or are willing to tolerate. Therefore, successful refreezing is dependent on the culture and norms of the individual's academic environment.

[OVERHEAD 28] How can we implement this change?

First, we cannot induce change if there is no motivation to change and we cannot induce motivation to change simply by putting more and more pressure on a person or school. Simultaneous with pressure, there must be sufficient psychological safety to permit people to feel less threatened and less defeated by the prospects of change. Motivation for faculty will come from the intrinsic desire to strive toward excellence - excellence in personal performance and excellence in the quality of education delivered within our classrooms. Psychological safety will have to emerge, and will be the result of team work between faculty and academic administrators. We must all believe that the whole team wants to win, and that the goal is outstanding education.

Next, change itself can occur rapidly and easily if innovations that have been tried elsewhere are adopted in their entirety. As mentioned earlier, to invent novel solutions can be slow and costly. However, the advantage of the latter approach is that the changes made are more likely to be congruent with other parts of the culture of the system and hence are more likely to survive.

We need to conduct research within the college system to define teaching excellence, and to create a set of standards appropriate for our own environment. These standards of performance may be generic - that is they would be suitable irrespective of our teaching disciplines. They may, on the other hand, be discipline specific. Research, discussion, innovation,

and compromise may be the hallmarks of this stage of the change process.

The last consideration is that the change effort is not successfully concluded until the new beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviour patterns are integrated both into the personalities of participants and into the culture of the system that is undergoing change. Both kinds of integration are especially difficult when dealing with the academic profession because of the strong commitment in our profession to the norm of autonomy - a norm to which we are not entitled until the standards issue is tackled.

[OVERHEAD 29] I am not for a second suggesting that seizing the day and striving toward teaching excellence and more sophisticated levels of professionalism will be easy. [OVERHEAD 30] I think that this Calvin & Hobbes cartoon strip best summarizes the treachery of the path that lies before us and the potential repercussions of our decisions. To seize the day and to move in innovative directions is not always easy. The process may be painful, may be long-term, but hopefully will result in progress, professional growth, and ultimately in educational excellence.

THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS

OF

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS

MARY PREECE
ACCC
MAY, 1990

AGENDA

1. A FLIGHT INTO FANCY
2. PROFESSIONALISM DEFINED
3. ADVANTAGES OF PROFESSIONALIZATION
4. WHY NO PROGRESS UP THE LADDER?
5. HOW CAN WE CLIMB HIGHER?
6. PROCESS OF PLANNED CHANGE
7. CARPE DIEM

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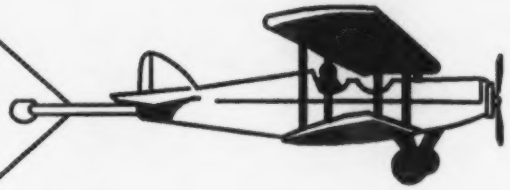
A FLIGHT

INTO FANCY



THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

OF

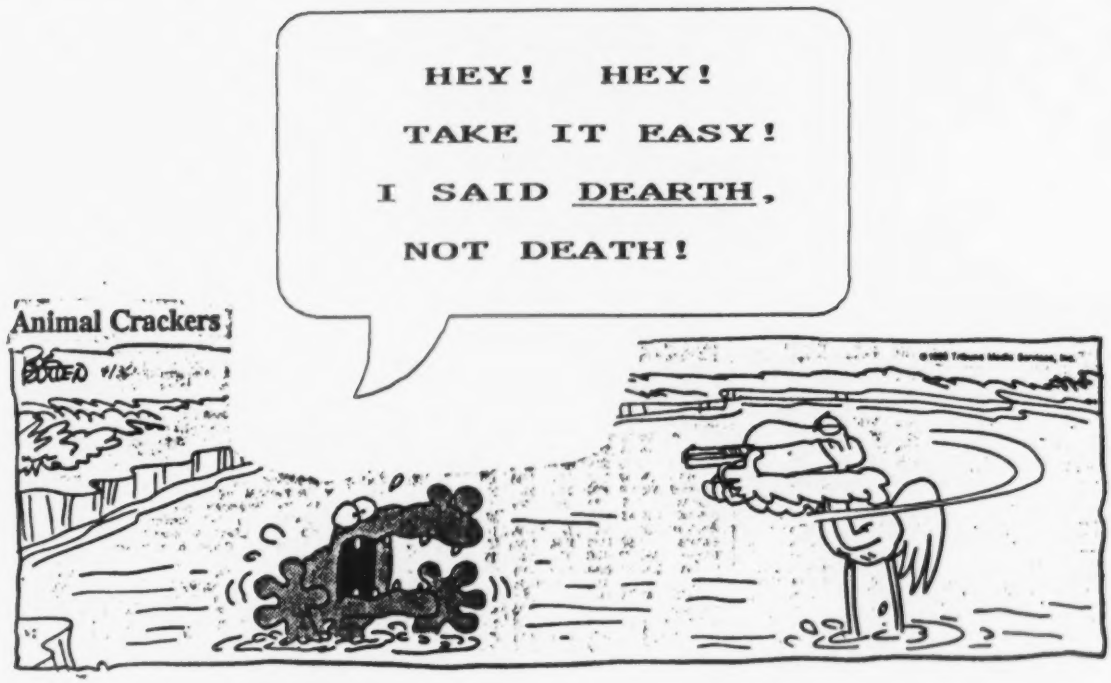
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

COMPARED TO

THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

OF

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS


HEY! HEY!
TAKE IT EASY!
I SAID DEARTH,
NOT DEATH!
Animal Crackers

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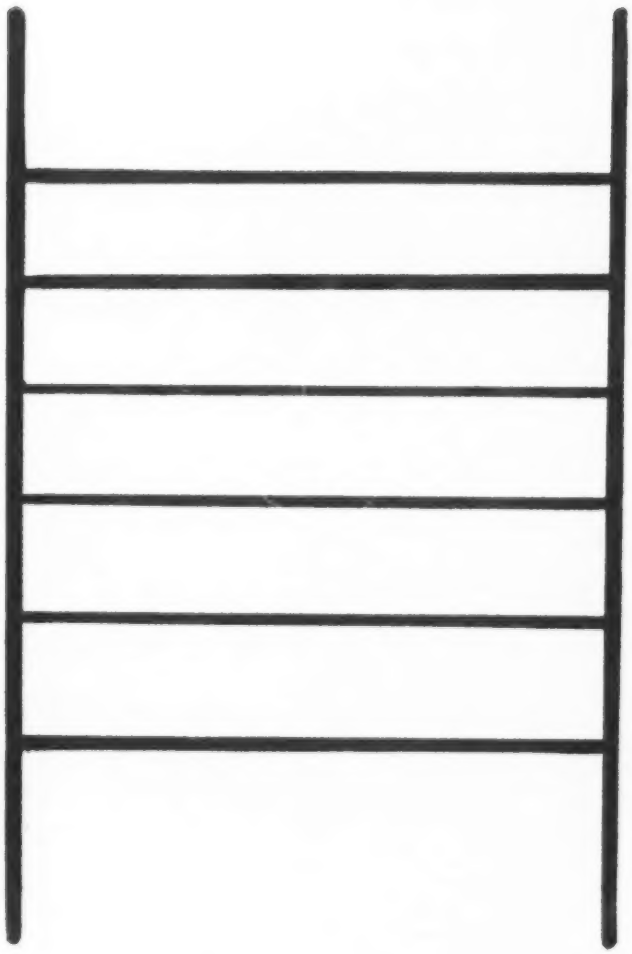
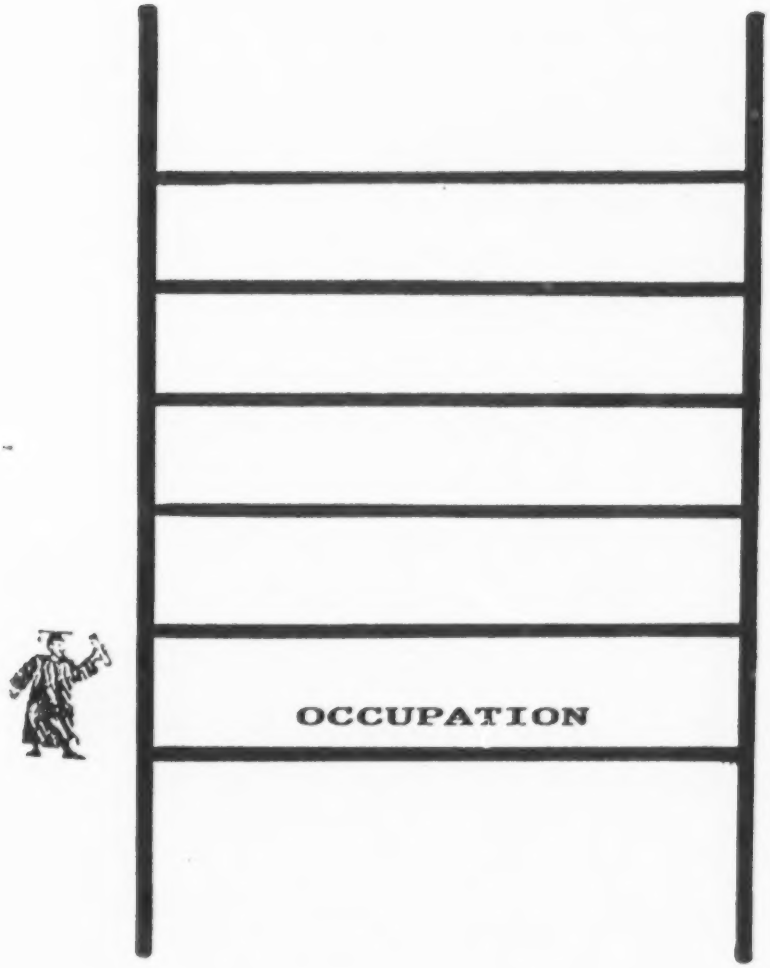
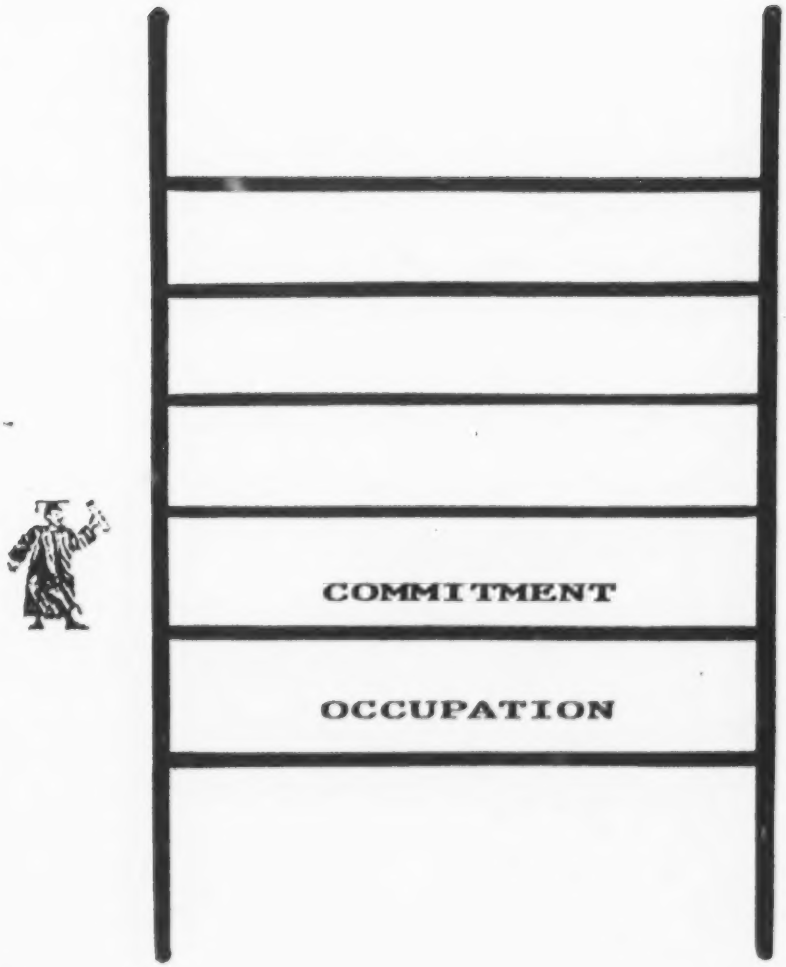
PROFESSIONALIZATION



PROFESSIONALIZATION



PROFESSIONALIZATION



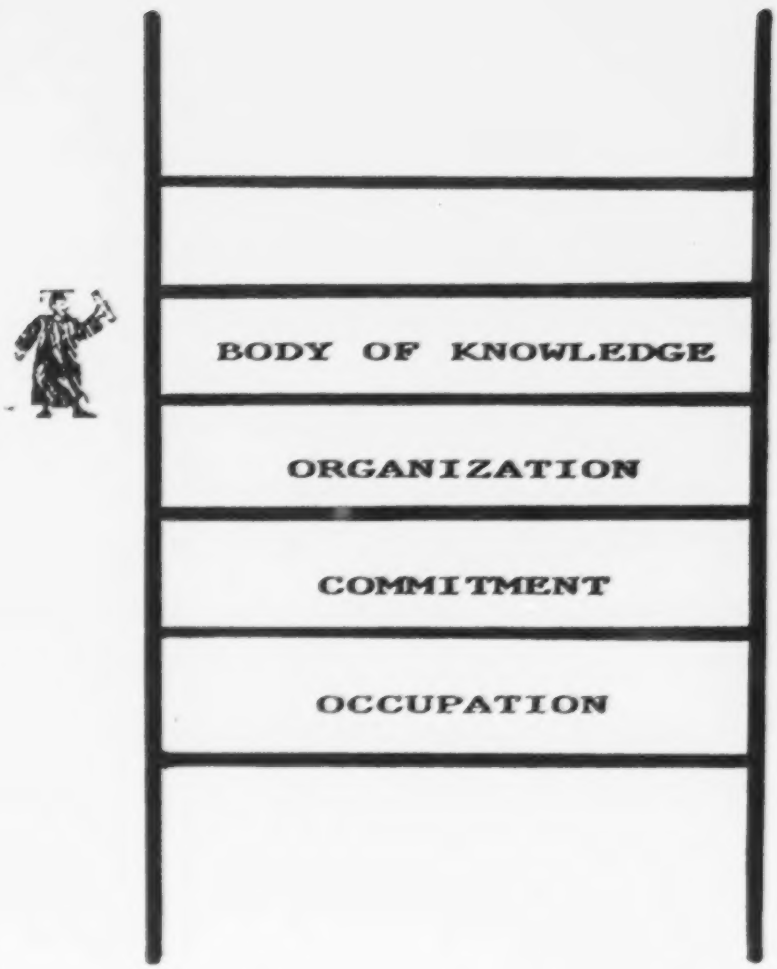
PROFESSIONALIZATION

ORGANIZATION

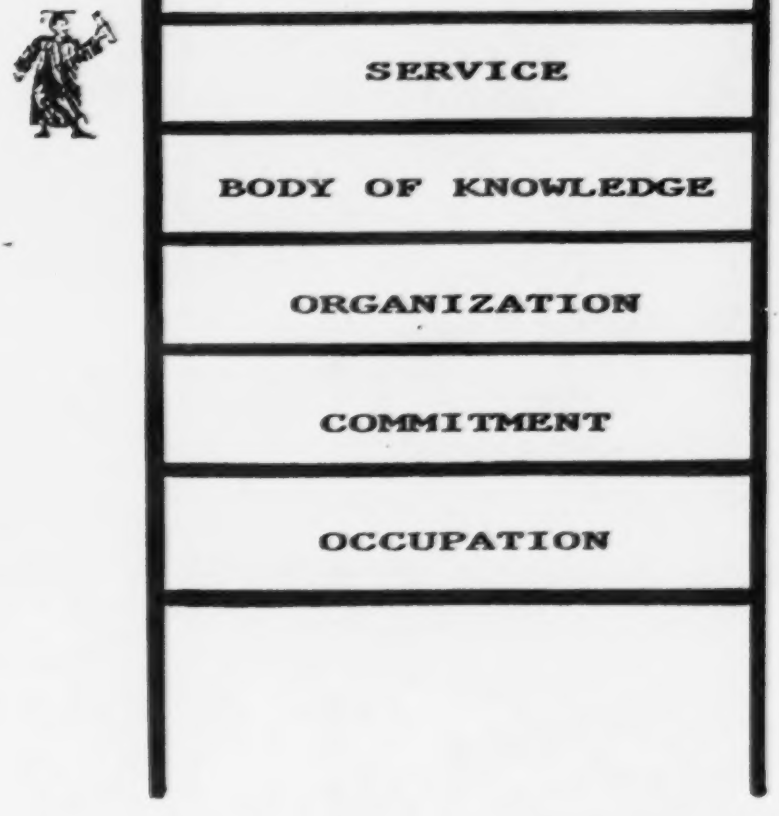
COMMITMENT

OCCUPATION

PROFESSIONALIZATION



PROFESSIONALIZATION



PROFESSIONALIZATION

AUTONOMY

SERVICE

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

ORGANIZATION

COMMITMENT

OCCUPATION

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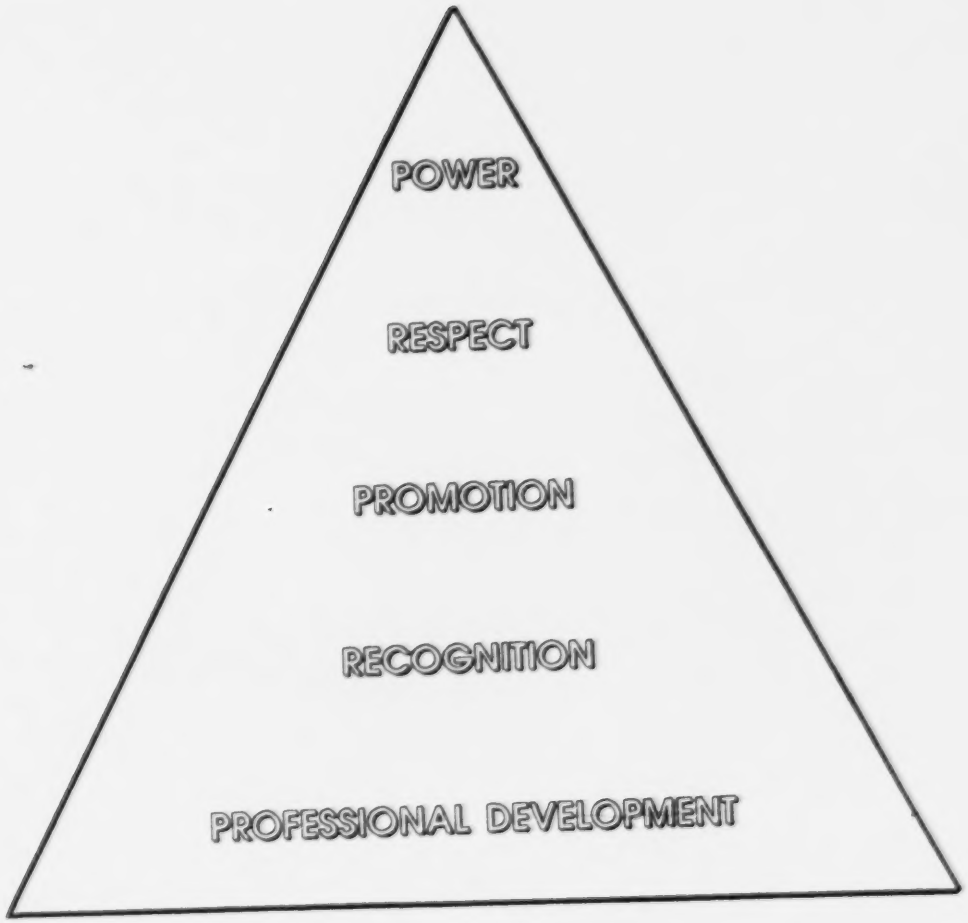
WHY ASPIRE

TOWARD

PROFESSIONAL STATUS?



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WHY NO

PROGRESS UP THE LADDER?

LACK OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

LACK OF A DEFINED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

THE TORONTO STAR Wednesday, March 21, 1990

College title tiff leaves professors in lingo limbo

Is there a doctor in the house? How about a doctorate? Okay, so you wouldn't go to an English PhD to have your appendix removed. But these professional designations can get awfully confusing at times, especially for those who treasure the string of letters that happen to follow their names.

Remember the fuss when lawyers lost their Queen's Counsel calling card?

Some say it's all just semantics. If so, it's a semantic samba that has turned into a lingo limbo for Ontario university professors who are suddenly no longer in a class of their own.

A few weeks ago, a new collective agreement signed by the province's colleges and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union gave community college teachers a 6 per cent raise over each of two years. And generously upgraded all 8,000 of them to the "professor" designation. The council of regents of community colleges had offered to replace the official term "teaching master," (everyone hated the female equivalent, "teaching mistress") and the union suggested professor.

Originally, we were trying to remove the gender bias, explains Eileen Burrows, president of nursing at Centennial College. The word teacher could not be used because it generally implies someone who is teaching in the lower schools.

It's interesting that the community college system would object to being lumped in with teachers in the lower echelons of education. Because this is the very category that has been engaged by some university professors who had to work damn hard for their professorial designation.

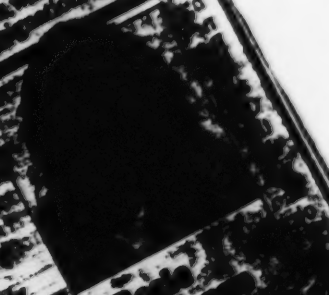
"As a teacher of writing I delight in anybody playing eccentric games with language," comments Harvey Kaye, an English professor at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto. "Like George Orwell, I believe that euphemism is sheer, cloudy vagueness. It's language that conceals instead of reveals. What's wrong with calling themselves teachers? It's an eminently dignified word."

University professors, in contrast, have, historically, been allowed to call themselves that because they have completed PhDs. They not only teach but are required to conduct academic research and publish papers in their field. Such is not now the case, however, in community college professorships, automatically make teachers professors, says Fred Wilson, president of the faculty association, and that the title tiff has not generated that much debate among his colleagues. "But it does convey a misleading message. I'm not saying that we're all out there publishing all the time. But our annual increase is based partly on a merit award, which does mean getting yourself published."

Adds York law professor Mary Jane Mossman: "I'm not concerned about titles myself. But I can understand how you would want to respect the tradition of academic [illegible] the definition for professor."

[illegible] my of university teachers, like York [illegible] Alain Farrod, who are still not [illegible] essors because they have not [illegible] "That's all right," says [illegible] Mister."

[illegible] of regents, and [illegible] up." He i



OVERHEAD NUMBER 19 NOT AVAILABLE

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HOW CAN WE CLIMB HIGHER?

CRITICAL SELF-EXAMINATION

ESTABLISH STANDARDS

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PROCESS OF PLANNED CHANGE

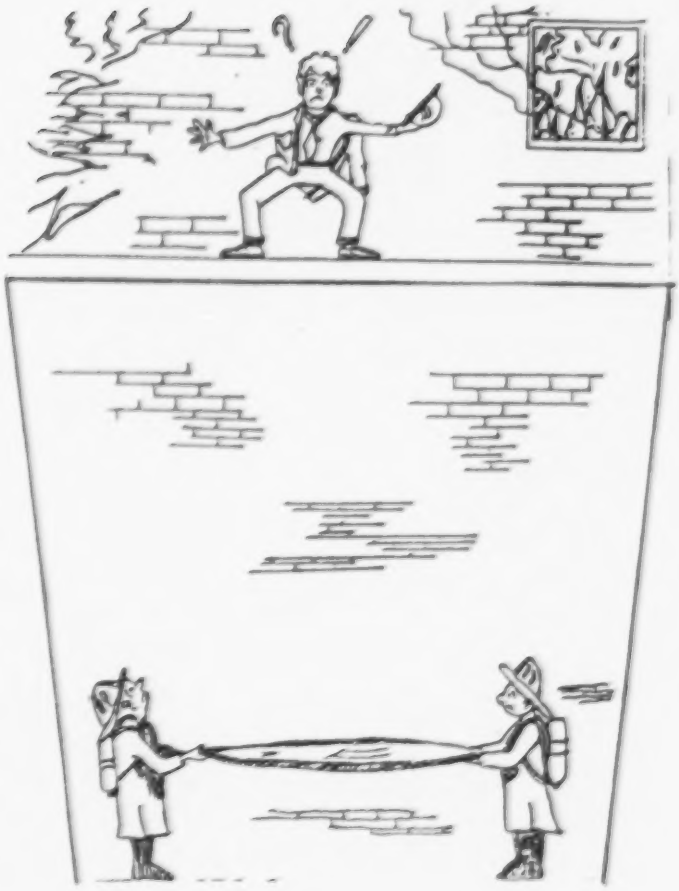
1. UNFREEZING

2. CHANGE

3. REFREEZING

UNFREEZING

MOTIVATION



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

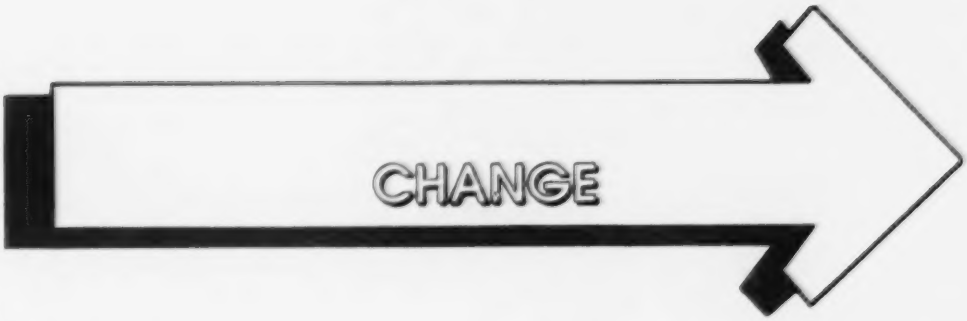
Mary Preece
May, 1990

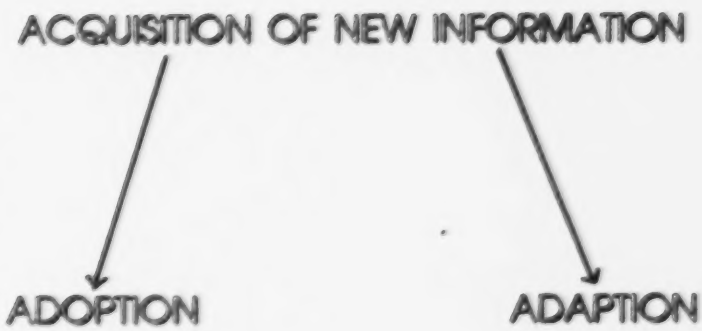
COGNITIONS

ATTITUDES

VALUES

BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS


CHANGE


ACQUISITION OF NEW INFORMATION
ADOPTION
ADAPTION

REFREEZING

The Better Half

"My new boss is a woman. Do you think I should shave my legs?"

INTEGRATION

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Steps Toward Professionalism

Mary Preece
May, 1990

AGENDA

1. A FLIGHT INTO FANCY
2. PROFESSIONALISM DEFINED
3. ADVANTAGES OF PROFESSIONALIZATION
4. WHY NO PROGRESS UP THE LADDER?
5. HOW CAN WE CLIMB HIGHER?
6. PROCESS OF PLANNED CHANGE
7. CARPE DIEM

CALVIN & HOBBES

EVER NOTICE HOW DECISIONS MAKE CHAIN REACTIONS?
HOW SO?
WELL, EACH DECISION WE MAKE DETERMINES THE RANGE OF CHOICES WE'LL FACE NEXT.
TAKE THIS FORK IN THE ROAD FOR INSTANCE. WHICH WAY SHOULD WE GO? ARBITRARILY, I CHOOSE LEFT.
IF WE HADN'T TURNED LEFT AT THE FORK, THIS NEW CHOICE WOULD NEVER HAVE COME UP.
I NOTE, WITH SOME DISMAY, YOU'VE CHOSEN TO JUMP THE LEDGE.
RIGHT. AND THAT DECISION WILL GIVE US NEW CHOICES.
LIKE, SHOULD WE BAIL OUT OR DIE ON THE LANDING?
EXACTLY. OUR FIRST DECISION CREATED A CHAIN REACTION OF DECISIONS. LET'S JUMP.
SEE? IF YOU DON'T MAKE EACH DECISION CAREFULLY, YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE YOU'LL END UP. THAT'S AN IMPORTANT LESSON WE SHOULD LEARN SOMETIME.
I WISH WE COULD TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS WITHOUT THE VISUAL AIDS.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
NOV 02 1990

Mary Preece
May, 1990